BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN,

Author of "Barbara's Brothers," "Roger's Revenge," "Little Lady Clare," etc.

"He saw Mrs. Callender stretched on the floor." p. 148.

CHAPTER IV.

A PRACTICAL JOKE.

"SHOOTING, indeed! Nobody asks *us* to shoot. It shows how much need there was for all that fuss about his health! When he chooses he can do just the same as other fellows. I always knew nobody but a muff would be such a precious molly-coddle."

Conny laughed. She could not help it. Claud did look so ridiculously aggrieved. It had been so ever since that unlucky tennis match when Ronald had shown that he could beat the champion of the "clan."

Mrs. Callender looked up mildly reproachful.

"My dear Claud, the unreasonable dislike you have taken to Ronald causes me great perplexity and uneasiness. It is both ungenerous and ungentlemanly, and it vexes your father very much. Besides you are so inconsistent with it. You have been lamenting the whole week because our guest was to return; and now that he has received another invitation which will detain him a fortnight longer, you make that a new ground of complaint. And of all other people you are the one who ought to complain least. Are you not going to Oxford after Christmas? And have you not set your heart upon that for long? You know it could hardly have been managed without this unexpected addition to our income, and yet you are the one to make the domestic difficulty with regard to housing a stranger ten-fold more difficult than it need be. It is a great pity you were not prepared for your matriculation before. If you had worked as hard as you might have done you might be going to college this term."

"And be out of the way of the new pet," interrupted Claud, rudely. "Thank you, mother; you never found me ungentlemanly till the arrival of this fine young dandy, and never wished me away from home before. It's like the young cuckoo pushing the other birds out of the nest. Don't you think we had all better take ourselves off, and leave you and the darling to enjoy yourselves without us?"

Claud would not have dared to speak so to his mother had his father been present, but Mr. Callender had been called from the breakfast-table to see a sick horse, and the young man presumed upon his absence; but he had gone too far to command the sympathy of the rest, and Conny broke in indignantly—

"How can you speak so to mother, Claud? You are getting unbearable with your silly jealousy, for you know it is nothing else. I can't think how you can keep harping always on the same string. Ronald never did any harm to you that you should hate him so. I call it quite wrong."

"Anyhow, it's a great bore," said Charley; "we never have any peace at all. When Ronald is here, you are always trying to pick a quarrel with him, and when he isn't, you're in a fret because the county people have taken him up more than they ever took any of us, and ask him to their houses and all that sort of thing. But you needn't be rude to mother about it. As she says, it was mainly for your sake the arrangement was made, and it's stupid of you to go and make everybody uncomfortable."

"Oh, yes, of course everything's my fault," sneered Claud, angrily, and Charley with an impatient "pshaw" swung himself out of the room to wait till his brother had recovered his temper.

But Claud's ill-humour lasted. He was vexed not to receive more invitations from the neighbours, forgetting how frequently in former years such invitations had been declined,

because he had fancied it more fun to remain with his father, and not be bothered with a lot of strangers. It might not have occurred to him to grumble had it not been that Ronald received several invitations to join house-parties in the locality, and forgetting that Ronald had friends amongst the sons of the house, friends that he had made at college, Claud chose to consider himself slighted, and grew more and more jealous and ill-disposed towards Ronald, a feeling which he imparted to Clara, who was angry on her favourite brother's account, and quite disposed to consider everything the fault of the "upstart," as they now often called him. Ronald had not troubled them with his presence at home much of late. He had first paid a visit to his friend the Viscount, and that had led to other invitations, and he had been a good deal absent from Clover Mead; but he was expected to return "for good" shortly, as he had recovered to a certain extent the power of study, and was anxious to have some quiet time for reading that he might not find on his return to Oxford that he had gone back and lost too much ground.

Conny sometimes said to herself that she should not be sorry when he did come back. She found she missed him a good deal, although she would not have dared to say so to anybody for fear of the ridicule with which such an admission would certainly be received. She had grown, if not fond of Ronald, at least rather interested in him, and she had also found that they were interested in the same sort of things, and they had had many really very engrossing discussions about the poor and what it was right to do for them, and what they should be taught to do for themselves.

This was a subject in which Conny had from childhood felt a great interest, and her mother and father had encouraged her to go about amongst the cottagers, and learn by her own observations the realities of their lives, the special privations and difficulties to which they were exposed, and the means that might and ought to be used to help them to overcome them. Mr. Callender was a very conscientious and kind-hearted landlord, and of all his children Conny was the only one who took a real interest in the condition of the people, so that both he and his wife had made her more of a companion in some ways than either of her brothers or her sister. When Ronald, awaking to some of the responsibilities entailed by the possession of land and tenants, had cast about in his mind for enlightenment on various subjects, it was to Conny that most of his questions had been addressed, and he had often found himself talking eagerly to her of his own home —the place where he had been born, of which he entertained but a vague remembrance, and consulting her as to whether or not it was his duty to take up his abode there, and look himself into all that concerned the people and their lives.

Conny was decidedly of the opinion that he ought, and told him so with the frankness of youth. She had a great idea of the obligation entailed by landed property upon its owners, and had seen enough of the evils of absentee landlordism to be a warm advocate of the system of living on the place and sharing the life of the people in person. So the talks they had had, and the information they had hunted up together had really been very interesting. Conny, though more shy than at first, and less disposed to seek Ronald out in any way, had not been able to withstand his evident desire to gain information; and there was certainly nothing in the nature of their conversations that could be called the least bit romantic or personal. Drains, sanitary arrangements, winter occupation for labourers, and such like topics were the foremost in their thoughts; but Conny had found it pleasant to have a companion in her visits to the cottagers, and there had been cases when Ronald's purse had been opened with a liberality that had won her warm gratitude. One sick woman had been thus sent off to an expensive convalescent home, which she certainly could not otherwise have reached; a child had been elected to an orphanage through Ronald's influence and liberality; whilst one of the village ne'er-do-wells had been shipped off to Canada, where an opening seemed to have been found that promised to suit him better than anything at home. So whatever other people might say of Ronald, Conny felt personally grateful to him, and no longer joined in any of the mockery with which his name had been surrounded. She did not even find his presence in the house a bore, and was secretly rather sorry that his return had been delayed.

Moreover, Conny found in Ronald an element which sometimes seemed to be lacking in those about her, or which, if it existed, was sedulously concealed from view. Reserve upon the deeper feelings of the heart is natural to the young, and indeed no one would wish it otherwise, as reverence for sacred things invokes a certain amount of silence and reticence. Still, if the feelings are there, it is well that some outlet should be found for them. It is well when we can find some one person to whom we can speak with the full assurance of sympathy. And some such sympathy existed between Ronald and Conny. Philanthropy was not the aim, the final aim of their purposes, it was but an outcome of a very real and personal Christianity. It was easier to speak of what might be done for the bodies of men; but both knew that this must be but a stepping-stone towards turning their hearts and hopes towards the Crucified One, who has bidden us love one another. And this mutual assurance was the thing that most sweetened this friendship in the heart of the girl.

"I think he is very good and kind," she said to herself often, "and he has not spoiled our summer one bit. I think I have liked it better than any we have ever spent. I suppose that is because Charley has been at home, but certainly it has not been the least bit of a bore having Ronald. And if only Claud were not so disagreeable, I don't see why we might not be very happy together. Ronald has lots of interesting books, and I know he would read to us in the long evenings, and tell us interesting things which he has seen in his travels. But if Claud is going to sulk all the time it will spoil everything. I can't think why he minds Ronald's being liked and asked out. If he goes on like this nobody can possibly care for him. It is so childish and stupid, too. And Claud is the eldest. He ought to know better."

Claud, however, had allowed the demon of jealousy to take possession of him, and what happened a few days later did not tend to allay the feverish passion. The whole Callender family were invited to join a regular "shooting picnic" from the castle, and though the father and mother declined for themselves, being "too old," as they phrased it, for such things, all the young people were glad to go, and Claud's wounded vanity was somewhat soothed by the invitation.

It was a pleasant day, warm and bright, but not too sunny, and the rendezvous was in every way suitable and agreeable; yet as the Callenders approached the scattered groups in the woodland glade, Claud's face fell somewhat, for he saw that Ronald was of the party, and that his costume and accoutrements were as usual very decidedly superior to his own—the kind of thing that Claud could not endure, for he was something of a dandy in his own way, and had a

great idea of cutting a good figure wherever he went.

Ronald came forward as soon as the new comers had exchanged greetings with their hosts, and shook hands warmly with Conny and Charley; but Claud and Clara had turned away in another direction, and it was rather obvious that they did not intend to notice their former guest. Conny thought this very rude, as indeed it was, but Ronald took no notice beyond what was implied in a very faint smile, and Conny tried to make amends by being very friendly and telling him all the news, and she was able to say quite sincerely that she was glad he was coming home next week.

"It is very kind of you to be glad," said Ronald, with a look in his eyes that no one ever saw there but herself; "for you know some people might think it a bore to have a visitor who stayed on and on such an unconscionable time."

"You don't feel like a visitor now," answered Conny, simply, "and the poor people are always asking when you will be coming back. I am sure they will be very glad."

"If you are glad that is enough for me," said Ronald, in a low tone. Her colour flew up, but she was too simple-minded to know exactly what such words implied.

"I am glad," was her frank response; "I have often wanted you, to tell you things, and to consult you. And mother will be glad too."

Ronald had a great many friends at the picnic, and as he had attached himself to Conny, she was drawn in amongst a new set of people, and quite unknown to herself she made a little sensation there. Her childish beauty had been developing and maturing rather rapidly of late, and her brightness and sweet frankness lent to her a peculiar charm. She was prettily dressed, though very simply, and her sunny curls clustering under her hat framed her face in a sort of golden aureola. Ronald's friends seemed to find her a wonderfully fascinating little creature, as indeed she could be at times, when she gave herself up to the innocent enjoyment of the moment, and her soft laugh rang out again and again, whilst her quick repartees and flashes of fun often raised an admiring laugh from those around her. She was quite the queen of the day to some of those present, and Clara, sitting apart with Claud, not much known or noticed, felt a sudden pang of envy, and wondered what it was in Conny and Ronald that seemed to make them favourites wherever they went. She had observed the same thing at times before, but it had never struck her as it did to-day.

It was not a pleasant party for Clara. Conny was engrossed by her new friends, and was not allowed to be her own mistress for a moment. Ronald was generally beside her, so that Clara did not care to approach her, for she knew that she had been rude to him, and that made her feel awkward. There was some shooting about in the wood, but pleasant idling was more the order of the afternoon, and a close was put to the sport by the accidental shooting of one of the earl's favourite pointers by a careless sportsman. So much the company heard soon after the accident occurred; but it was only a little later on that it transpired who the careless sportsman had been, and great was the consternation of Conny to hear that her brother had been the defaulter.

"It was just like Claud," said Charley, with ill-concealed annoyance, as he walked homewards with Conny after the break-up of the party. "He professed to wish to shoot, and several fellows went off with the keepers; but with so many people in the wood one had to be very careful, and it was not much fun. But it never would have happened if Claud had not wanted to show off. He is a good enough shot, but nothing so very wonderful; and just before he fired Ronald called out to him to look out, he was certain a dog was there; but, of course, Claud would not listen, he was certain it was a hare, and the next moment he had fired, and killed the dog. He says now that it was Ronald bawling at him that startled him and interfered with his aim; but that is all bosh, he did not fire till several seconds afterwards. I can't think what has come over Claud. He is such a cross-grained fellow now, one cannot say a word to him."

Claud was walking home with Clara, neither of them in a very agreeable frame of mind. Clara was dissatisfied with herself, which of course made her feel cross and ill-tempered towards others, and though not by nature a bad-hearted girl, she was going through a stage of vexation and annoyance that made her disposed to take everything amiss.

It had occurred to her for the first time that there was something about Conny which was more attractive than any qualities she herself possessed, and with it had come the suspicion that Ronald admired her sister in a way that no one had yet admired her; and she had felt a strange pang, half of envy, half of annoyance, and was utterly unable to analyse her feelings, which all seemed to be upheaved.

It had hardly ever occurred to Clara so far to think seriously of marriage, though she had vaguely supposed she should be married some day, as most girls were in due course of time. But it certainly had not occurred to her that she would be passed over for her younger sister; and yet here was Ronald—who would some day be a wealthy man, and who had a nice estate of his own somewhere—paying open homage to Conny, whilst he seldom looked at her. Really, it was rather galling. Conny must have been forward and bold; and Ronald was not at all a nice sort of youth. It was a thousand pities he had ever come to them at all.

"I say," said Claud, suddenly breaking in upon her musings, "I intend to serve that fellow out somehow; it was all his fault. Everything is his fault. Nothing has ever gone right since he came. I say, Clara, what can we do to turn the tables on him? Here are all of them turning round and making much of him, never seeming to remember that he is an alien and intruder, and that he is a fearful muff all the time, with all his fine airs and graces. I really will show him up in his true colours," added Claud, viciously. "I know he is an awful poltroon, if one could only find his weak point. We never used to be bad at practical jokes. I don't see why we shouldn't be as clever now."

"Ghosts are his weak point," said Clara, contemptuously. "Don't you know he never will laugh and joke about them, or say he doesn't believe in them? He looks grave, and says it is too mysterious a subject to be explained away by a laugh or a jest. A real, good ghost would be the way to show what a coward he can be."

"Bravo! I always meant to play ghost for him; but I had forgotten. Yes, Clara, that will be the thing; and with the dark days coming on we can arrange it all beautifully. How shall we do it? Shall I dress up for the part?"

"No, no; that would be stupid and common-place, and Ronald has all his wits about him, and would not be easily hoodwinked. We must do it in a much more mysterious way. I know one way of producing a luminous female figure beautifully, if only it can be done safely; but there's rather a risk of fire."

"Tell me," cried Claud, eagerly.

"Well, you know that wicker figure I have for making my dresses on? It is all complete—a body as well as a

skirt. Well, if we were to drape it artistically with white, and put a lamp inside to light it all up from within, and put it in a dark corner of Ronald's room, I think we might manage to give him an uncommonly good scare. Only there might be a danger that the lamp would set light to the drapery."

"Oh, we could easily get some talc and make everything quite safe. Why, that is an excellent idea, Clara, and worthy of our family; and it could be done so easily, too. We could dress up the figure in my room close by, and smuggle it into his during the course of the evening. He never takes a lamp to his room, because one is always kept burning there, and that, of course, we should have removed; and so when he comes in all he will see will be this ghost-like figure, with outstretched arms—we can soon manage that—illuminated faintly by the light streaming from itself. Oh, it will be capital—first rate. He will soon show himself in his true colours then; and we shall turn the tables on him in a way that he will never get over. A fellow who is scared by a mock ghost can never have the face to pose as a hero any more."

"Well, I shan't be sorry to open people's eyes. They are much too fond of making a fuss of him; and really I cannot see anything in him. He seems to me a very ordinary kind of young man. I don't think I like him at all."

Claud detested him cordially, and was delighted at the idea of taking some sort of a revenge upon him. To make Ronald look a fool—as they phrased it—to give them a good cause for laughing at him, would be most welcome to Claud just then, and many were the rehearsals of the scene that he and Clara held together in the privacy of his room, with the wicker figure for their ghost.

And really the effect was excellent and unearthly to the last degree. A lamp with a pale green shade over it, the flame protected by a disc of talc suspended above, was placed inside the wicker figure, which was then draped in straight white folds, the head and arms being added by a little ingenuity on Claud's part. Placed in a dark room this figure presented the most ghostlike appearance, and would undoubtedly give a great shock to anyone coming unexpectedly upon it, whether or not the person were predisposed to a fear of the supernatural. The attitude—that of a woman moving forward with outstretched arms—was rather cruelly contrived in order the better to suggest the childish "dream," or whatever it was, that had made so great an impression upon Ronald's mind. Everything was secretly contrived and in readiness by the time Ronald returned, and it was resolved to play the practical joke upon him the very first night of his arrival, when nothing could by any possibility have happened to put him on his guard.

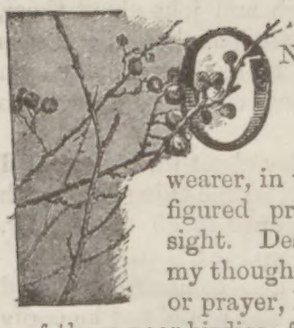
The conspirators made no confidants—not even Charley, the mischief loving, was told of this piece of work. Clara said he would let it out to Conny, who might tell Ronald, and all the fun be spoilt. They called it fun to themselves, but it was more than the love of fun which had prompted the joke. The hearts of the brother and sister beat rather high as the evening waned, and Claud slipped out to put everything in readiness after the maids had taken the hot water to the bedrooms, and would visit them no more. The look he gave his sister on his return showed her that all was well, and that the effect was excellent, and they waited with impatience till the moment should come for the last good-nights to be said.

But they had left one thing out of their calculations, and that was the motherly instinct of the mistress of the house. After the good-nights had been said, and Ronald had disappeared into his sitting-room, in which he often spent half-an-hour before retiring, it occurred to Mrs. Callender that she would just go and see if all was right in the guest's bedroom, and quietly feeling her way to the door in the dark, she turned the handle and entered.

Ronald in the adjoining room was suddenly startled by a strange muffled cry and the sound of a heavy fall. Rushing into the room, he saw Mrs. Callender stretched on the floor, amidst a mass of white drapery, for the presence of which he could not account; and he had no time to wonder about it, for the whole mass was in a blaze, and the flames were almost playing round the form of the unconscious woman.

(Continued on page 161.)

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.



ONE Sunday morning recently in church my attention was attracted—and distracted—by a bonnet, doubtless intended to adorn the head of its wearer, in which the bodies of four little birds figured prominently. I never saw a sadder sight. Despite my utmost endeavours to keep my thoughts fixed exclusively on chant or hymn or prayer, I could not help thinking constantly of those poor birdies; for the lady who wore them was sitting immediately in front of me, and every time I looked up their beads of eyes seemed fixed reproachfully on me. I have no recollection of the preacher's text or sermon, for I heard neither. Those little dead birds were my preachers that morning, and their wordless sermon has prompted this protest against a custom which cannot be characterised as other than barbarous and heartless to a degree

That gentle, refined, cultured women, who in all the details of daily life are the very essence of kindness and consideration to all about them, can bring themselves to countenance such a horrible fashion, would seem incredible, were there not such an abundance of painful evidence to the contrary.

The fashion is certainly an outrage on good taste, and it is difficult to know on what possible grounds it can be defended or justified. Milliners may say that birds on bonnets look "pretty" and "artistic," but surely no lady, after giving the subject a few moments' thought and calm reflection, will agree that this is so. No truly beautiful or artistic effect can be obtained by diverting anything in nature from its legitimate use; and no one yet has been found to affirm that the legitimate use of a bird of beautiful plumage is that it be murdered and mounted on a frame of straw for woman's adornment! The whole idea of the

thing is repulsive—more worthy of the untutored savage than of the enlightened ladies of a Christian land, and the wonder is that such a barbarous custom should ever have found supporters amongst us. It is impossible to justify or defend such a fashion, and the only conclusion one can come to is, that it is adopted thoughtlessly.

I for one will never believe that any lady who saw a bird flying through the air would allow a sportsman to shoot it in order that she might wear its dead body in her bonnet. She would be shocked at the bare idea of permitting such an atrocity. And yet where is the difference between obtaining a bird for trimming purposes in this way, and buying one already killed and prepared? The difference is merely this—that in the latter case the lady is saved the pain of witnessing a small tragedy. There is no difference so far as the bird is concerned.

It has been said that if women could only be brought to realise that the little mass of feathers with which they trim a hat was once instinct with life, joyously skimming the air to find food for its nestlings, and that in the midst of its happy, innocent life it was ruthlessly killed, murdered (aye, put it in big letters, please Mr. Printer), MURDERED to adorn their head-dress, they would be horrified. The living bird, rejoicing in the life God gave it, is never for a moment associated in their minds with the "pretty," "sweet," inanimate thing that they buy in the milliner's shop! And yet, dear madam, you know very well that the body of the bird you wear must once have lived, and you know, too—or, you ought to know—that it did not die a natural death, but was brutally killed expressly for your gratification. Can you justify such a gratification? Surely this must be a case in which "evil is wrought for want of thought"—at all events let us hope so.

I once remonstrated with a lady friend for wearing a dead bird in her bonnet, and she retorted that she could see no harm in wearing it, for if she had not bought it someone else would! The bird was killed before she knew anything about it, and she did not consider her purchase and use of it such a great crime! I pointed out to her that the bird would never have been killed unless there had been a purchaser in view, and when she became the purchaser she became also at once the cause for the slaughter of the bird. She made no reply, and we have never since referred to the subject; but from that day I have never noticed a bird in any head-dress she has worn. Would that I could bring home the sin of conforming to such a cruel fashion with equal force and with as practical a result to every lady reader of these words!

I rejoice to see it stated that leaders of society and fashion are beginning to wake up to the cruelty of this long-continued custom, and are insisting that henceforth bird trimming shall not be used for their orders. Thank God, if this be true. There will now be some chance of the birds enjoying the life He gave them; of their ministering to man's comfort and pleasure by their sweet songs and graceful flights as God designed. The most brazen advocate of bird trimming would scarcely be bold enough to declare that He intended the beautiful-plumaged, bright-winged marvels of His hand to be murdered and mummified for the decoration of a woman's bonnet!

"Once instinct with life."

God cares for the lives of all His creatures; "not even a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." He has kept count of every slaughtered innocent that has passed through the hands of the milliners, and one day He will want to know concerning them. How will ye answer Him, ye women who have worn His birds? *Worn* them! Oh, the thought of it!

I hope with all my heart that these lines will meet the eye of the lady who dared—unthinkingly, let us hope—to enter God's house with the direct produce of *four murders* on her head. If my words, with God's blessing, shall cause her, and any other thoughtless women, to give up a fashion that has absolutely nothing to commend it, and everything to condemn it, I will heartily thank Him who made every bird that flies, and the next bird-song I hear shall be my guerdon.

D.

KITH AND KIN IN THE OUTER CIRCLE.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

The Married Sister-in-Law.

If the injurious tendency of the unmarried sister-in-law, like that of the mother-in-law, is to remember too well, and make too much of earlier ties, the inclination of the married sister-in-law is to forget them too easily and make too little of them. Or if she acknowledges their vitality it is to employ them solely or principally for her own ends. In the present condition of society it is the more prominent and potent mischief of the two.

Women, as well as men, change in their codes of manners and standards of what is right with changing generations. Women have undoubtedly been changing much in the last half century. An accomplished woman recorded lately, in a magazine for girls, her impression of the transformation which had come to pass in her day. The timid, docile girl (coeval with the sandalled shoe and the smoothly braided hair), the girl who was solicitous to please, who looked always for help and encouragement, the very girl who as a young wife was most apt to be ruled by her mother, and put upon by her elder sister and sister-in-law, has vanished or is rapidly vanishing. In her place has come the frank, fearless, self-reliant girl who is sufficient for herself, who can keep her own footing, who often renders help, but rarely seeks it, and is altogether in mind, body, and estate better equipped than her predecessor for the rough battle of life. There is some gain in her advent, and there is also some loss, as gains and losses are frequently balanced in our present sphere of existence. It is pleasant and comforting to see a girl well armed in all points, dauntless and debonnaire. It is not so pleasant to find her, apart from conventional politeness, indifferent whether she pleases or displeases, disrespectful, disobliging, self-engrossed, and wilful. She is assured of her own powers, and not troubled with superfluous shyness, which, when it occurs in moderation, and is not pushed to self-consciousness—another form of self-conceit—is like the dew on the lily or the rose.

Miss Thackeray, the author to whom I have referred, attributes this alteration in women partly to the great influx of American girls in the higher ranks, piquante in their originality and independence of character, who, though of old English descent, are not altogether English in their ways. Probably the change is due still more to the prevailing tone of the literature of the day, which in its turn is affected by American literature. It is precisely the cool, confident, capable girl of the time who has made such strides in her education extending through every grade, from Girton and Somerville Hall down to board schools, that blossoms into the well-satisfied, energetic young matron prepared for every contingency under the sun. She is in certain respects a great blessing to all who have to do with her. They are saved much trouble and responsibility on her account, though they have to suffer on occasions from her daring, her shallow cleverness (will she ever forgive me?), her nonchalant self-indulgence, her crotchetiness. We, too, value her spirit, her enterprise, her courage highly, so highly that we venture to warn her and her girl friends of some defects in her sway. She is a person of real consequence in the world, but she is not the centre of the universe, round which applauding and deferential satellites are to revolve. She knows a great deal, but she does not know everything. She has attained a very laudable, honourable position as a young wife and mother, and the mistress of a household; she may be also a respectable scholar, even among scholarly men, a learned and well-informed young woman in a generation which to its credit neither despises nor maligns learning or information in women. But a little arrogance, not to say insolence, a little lack of humility, generosity, sympathy, go far to spoil all the rest. To such a married woman an unmarried sister-in-law, or even sister who may be naturally less well endowed, who is almost always more deficient in influence, authority, and the command of worldly means, is a far inferior creature. The ruling-spirit may have enough good breeding and good humour to imply this rather than to say it, but she does not hesitate to act upon it. She is so much in the habit of thinking first of herself and of her husband and babies that she does not feel the slightest shame for her egotism. She is curiously—comically, I had almost said—superbly unconscious of it. She has no conscience or scruple in considering that her younger, even her elder, relations ought to be at her beck and call whenever the fancy takes her. In order to employ them on her business she interferes ruthlessly with their arrangements, robs them of leisure for study, for enjoyment, for chalking out for themselves, and entering upon such individual careers as we are thankful to know are now within the reach of many women. She does not think of any sacrifice on their part, any reward to which they are entitled for their compliance with her demands. It is just possible that if the unmarried sisters and sisters-in-law got fair play, they would be quite as able to do without the matron as she is fit to do without them; but she acts as if it were altogether the reverse. What do unmarried girls and women exist for except to be useful to their more fortunate and prosperous sisters, the matrons of their kindred? It is enough recompense for the hard-worked maidens to be suffered to wait on the behests, and share the pleasure, of their superiors. Here virtue is its own reward, though it is on the cards that the behests may be very wearisome, and the pleasures utterly unpalatable to the guests at the feast.

It is not of their privileged (?) guests' likings, wishes, or even welfare, that their cheerful, high-minded tyrant is thinking. She does not summon her sisters—above all, her sisters-in-law—to furnish them with treats and galas. It does not strike her that the homes of these female relations may be less bright than her own, their lives more fretted with care and worry. She invites the women-folk among her kindred purely to suit her convenience. When she is very well and happy, when she is amply provided with entertainment in the shape of interesting engagements, and what represents to her brilliant gatherings of company, when she is setting out, escorted by her husband, on some delightful expedition, she is apt to forget these honorary maids-of-honour and ladies-in-waiting. But when she feels fagged and out of spirits, when her neighbourhood is dull, for some reason, when she is setting out for the sea-side with several young children, and does not choose to take with her more than one servant, or prefers to dispense with a servant, and, above all, when sickness, with its anxious days and dreary nights, flings a cloud over the house, then, with hot haste, sisters and sisters-in-law are bidden to fly to the rescue.

There is another side to this picture unquestionably. There are married sisters and sisters-in-law who are the good

geniuses, the guardian angels of their unmarried sisters. But I am now dealing with the abuse of the relationship, which in this generation is, I believe, to be found more frequently in the conduct of the married than in that of the unmarried sister-in-law. The picture given is highly coloured, but it has a foundation of truth. The exactions of the married sister-in-law can be manifold, and her selfish obliviousness to the waste of her kindred's time and talents, and to what are really their obligations and interests, is hard to exaggerate.

There is a form of the sisters-in-law connection which has to do with the wives of respective brothers. These women stand more or less on an equality. They are not entitled to claim more than an exchange of friendship, and are very similar to ordinary friends and acquaintances. The sisters-in-law, in this instance, are drawn more to each other, or driven farther apart by such arbitrary accidents of likeness or unlikeness in worldly circumstances, nearness or remoteness of residence, interests or tastes in common, as have a great deal to do with friendships which are not those of kindred. There is one most regrettable source of condemnation and pity, which is sometimes found in association with the last defined sisters-in-law. It is when their small bickerings and foolish jealousies are sufficient to separate chief friends in the persons of brothers.

Withal, whatever be the description of sisters-in-law, there is nothing in the tie which good principles, good sense, and good temper cannot control for good, not even though these kith and kin in the outer circle should be exposed to the injudicious test against which Jane Austen raised her witty voice a hundred years ago. Need I say that this test, which provokes many a breach of domestic peace, is the perilous custom of sisters-in-law running daily, in the most free and easy manner, in and out of each other's houses, with the result of each woman babbling perpetually about the other's most important and most trivial affairs?

THE IMAGINARY FEARS OF CHILDHOOD.

THOSE of us who have reached middle-age, and have passed through the great experiences of life—love, marriage, and parenthood—are apt to look back at childhood through a rosy haze; we imagine it to have been a golden period, free from care and unhappiness. Yet the first decade of a child's life is not always so unclouded as we would fain persuade ourselves. The constant desire of all children to reach maturity proves this, for where there is perfect satisfaction and content there is no demand for alteration. Children are but men and women in miniature, and the ratio of unhappy lives amongst them is much in proportion to that of their elders, depending greatly upon circumstances and upon temperament. Naturally children of delicate organization, sensitive and intellectually active, are less likely to pass through life comfortably than their more phlegmatic and pachydermatous brothers and sisters.

One of the most fruitful sources of childhood's suffering is fear, especially imaginary fear, dread of the darkness, of the unknown, of supernatural influences. What a child cannot understand usually holds for him some element of awe; whilst, on the other hand, by some quaint juxtaposition of ideas, the most commonplace object will be invested with terror. A boy once told me, as we passed a house, the steps of which were adorned by a couple of stone lions, that until he reached the age of five those ornaments were objects of dread to him. He had heard them called "lions," and in his childish mind associated them with the tales of fierce fights in jungles with the king of beasts, in which his elder brothers delighted. "I never passed them in my daily walk with my nurse," he said, "without a feeling of great fear, thinking we were running a terrible risk, and wishing I dare get close enough to see the bones of those whom the lions had sprung upon and devoured, scattered about." It was a very silly mistake to make, perhaps; but most of childhood's fears have as little basis. Yet what moments of horror the little fellow must have silently borne, and what an amount of courage must have been daily called up to pass, without outward evidence of fear, those passive but, to his mind, ferocious beasts.

Unconsciously parents raise up bugbears for their children by a thoughtless manner of speaking about ordinary things, or by the use of curious expressions unintelligible to the little listeners. It was the custom of a certain minister when praying with his children to entreat the Almighty to deliver them from "Satanic influence." It was a much-debated question among the little flock what was the substance or shape of this dreaded enemy. One day, on the road leading to their school, was opened a building, with the inscription carved over its door, "Mechanics' Institute." At once the question was settled—this was the "thing" father prayed they might be delivered from; and until they were quite big children, neither lads nor lasses passed the building without inward fear and dread of the unknown danger which might at any time assail them.

Yet there are imaginary fears which hold their little victims in a grip firmer and more terrible than these. One's heart aches for many children who have gone through agonies, the memory of which will never be effaced, from this cause alone. One who has drunk deeply herself of the cup of childhood's suffering writes: "There are some of us who in after years say to fate, 'Now, deal us your hardest blows, give us what you will, but let us not suffer again as we suffered in our childhood.'"

Darkness and loneliness are dreaded by children because at such times these fears assail them most. Mrs. Jameson, in her autobiography, tells us, "The fear of darkness and of supernatural influences was to me, from earliest days, a source of suffering, acute, permanent, and always acknowledged. As long as I remember anything, I remember these horrors of my infancy." The ghost of Hamlet's father a picture of which she had seen in a large volume of Shakespeare, was the phantom which haunted her, following her up and down stairs, pacing her bedroom, "exorcised only by the blessed light." To Sara Coleridge also this ghost of Hamlet's father was a nightly visitant, making the hours of darkness hideous. The hateful representations of Apollyon, with which some editions of "Pilgrim's Progress" are illustrated, haunt many a child's lonely hours.

Oliver Wendell Holmes confesses to "terror, which lasted

very long," of ships. "I used," he says, "to hide my eyes from the sloops and schooners that were wont to lie at the end of the pier." One other cause of childish fear he had of more fearful significance. "There was a great wooden hand, a glovemaker's sign, which used to swing and creak in the blast as it hung before a certain shop, a mile or two out of the town. Oh, the dreadful hand! always hanging there ready to catch up a little boy, who would come home to supper no more, whose porringer would be laid away empty henceforth, and his half-worn shoes wait until his smaller brother grew to fit them."

Much of the suffering of children from imaginary fears is absolutely needless. Many of the terrors could be evaporated by a little explanation, by a firm hand brushing away the cobwebs of childish ignorance. With nightly horrors and dread of darkness it is more difficult to deal, yet let mothers, be they ever such sticklers for the observance of certain rules and regulations, be ready to break through them, to do anything to spare their little ones the agony of nocturnal fears. Go to your children, and if they are lying wakeful and feverish, perhaps with the perspiration of silently-borne terror damp on the head and hands, do not think it waste of time to stay beside their beds, or foolish indulgence to brighten their room with "the blessed light." "Our children are healthy, and without a trace of such morbidness," you say; "such cases as those are rare." It is comfortable to take child-life in this "taken-for-granted" way; but I know that such cases do exist, and we who have care of young children do well to watch them and note any signs of the existence of such fears.

We must not wait for the little victims to complain. On no subject, unfortunately, are children more inclined to be reticent. It is an instinct with sensitive children "to make a *cache*, and bury therein their doubts, dreams, hopes, and terrors." Mrs. Jameson says of her sufferings from fear, "They were never revealed. I had heard children ridiculed for such fears, and I held my peace." From dread of banter, joke, and ridicule, children will bear in silence much that it would be inexpressibly helpful to talk about, and bear in company with another. Let us be very careful that by no careless word or thoughtless laugh we repress a childish confidence, and doom our child to bear alone a burden of imaginary fear.

ISABEL SUART ROBSON.

AUTUMN LEAVES.

BY RICHARD WILTON, M.A.

In peaceful solitude they flutter down,
And strew the woodland pool and lichened rock;
Decked in all shades of orange, red, and brown,
Which sober green with painted glories mock.

Spring-time can boast its wealth of blossoms fair,
The summer umbrage like an emerald glows,
But autumn's mild decay illumes the air
With colours which no other season knows.

Oh, may the hope of my declining hour
Be seen to brighten with departing breath;
And like the leaves in an autumnal bower,
Take lustre from the gentle touch of death.

Then, like the leaves, I must my part fulfil
Through all the passage of Life's little year,
In shine or shade, in stormy days or still,
At lightsome noontide, or at midnight drear.

Those patient leaves have kept their steadfast place,
Or only to Æolian music stirred;
Have fanned with cooling shade the traveller's face,
Or screened the secret of a roosting bird.

And cannot I some helpful influence shed,
Some shelter offer, or some shadow throw,
Comfort some anxious heart, or aching head,
While from my grateful lips sweet praises flow?

And as those arching boughs of crimson tint
Give to the light a beauty not its own,
While through the coloured leaves the sunbeams glint
On shining water, or on mossy stone,

So when my life sinks low on fluttering wing,
May light surround me from the ensanguined Tree,
Through healing leaves a cheering radiance fling,
And bathe my soul in hues of Calvary.

FOOD AND DRINK.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE,

Author of "The Art of Nursing," etc.

V.—WATER.

THE beverage and only natural palliative of thirst which God has provided for us is water; and, according to the absence or presence of certain salts, it is either soft or hard. It is of great importance that the water we drink or use for cooking purposes in any way should be good. I shall first of all note the principal causes which often make water unwholesome, so that you may assure yourselves that what you are using is not contaminated in any of these ways.

The presence of organic impurities in water has had very serious results, outbreaks of diarrhœa often being traced to it. It is a common cause of dysentery, and has been known to induce cholera, malarious and typhoid fevers. Even the use of milk adulterated with impure water has led to these results. If there is too much saline matter in water it is apt to produce gravel and other serious disorders. If you are in doubt about the purity of the water in your house have it analysed, and if it is contaminated in any way by the imperfections of sewer arrangements, the sooner you have that set to rights the better.

Water is impure when it becomes contaminated with lead, which it acquires from passing through leaden pipes

"In peaceful solitude they flutter down."

or being stored in leaden cisterns. Some of the metal becomes dissolved, and lead-poisoning is often the result.

Water to be good for drinking should be quite clear when you pour it into a tumbler. There should be oxygen and carbonic acid gas present in it. It should have no decided taste of any sort or kind.

When you draw off water from the tap you should allow it to run to waste for a minute or so. Thus, all that has been collected in the pipes will be got rid of.

Water for drinking or cooking should be filtered. Happily in London, the water provided by the water companies is first of all filtered through sand and gravel. Animal charcoal, however, purifies water better than anything else, and a good filter removes not only suspended matters both mineral and organic, but it effects a chemical action on any organic matter still remaining.

A writer on water says: "The best domestic filters owe their action to this agent (charcoal), and it is probable that they have the power of completely depriving water of any noxious property of an organic nature that it may possess. There is always the possibility, however, that through defective action some active matter may pass through, and where room for suspicion exists that water may be dangerously contaminated it is prudent to subject it to boiling, instead of relying solely on filtration. The purifying power of animal charcoal is not unlimited. When water is charged with organic matter the charcoal soon ceases to be effective. With ordinary drinking water, however, where the organic impurity is small in amount, a filter will continue to act satisfactorily for several months, or even longer, provided, as is always necessary, the passage of the water is not too quick. After ceasing to act properly animal charcoal may be cleansed and again fitted for use, and to secure a constant state of efficiency, a filter should from time to time be subjected to this process."

It is thought well by some to let the filter run dry every three months to renew the purifying power of the charcoal by letting the oxygen of the air get to it. If you can get at the charcoal block in the filter take it out, brush, clean, and, if you possibly can, bake it.

The sponge at the top of your filter needs cleaning, and often renewing altogether. In all sponges kept constantly wet a gelatinous material forms, and cleansing the sponge thoroughly will alone get it out.

I name these matters because many people buy a filter and go on using it day after day, month after month, and I fear often year after year without ever considering that the filter in all its parts requires thorough cleansing from time to time.

For those who may be unable to buy a filter there is a cheap and easy method of making one, and as it may prove useful to some reader I will tell you here how to do it.

Get a common earthenware flower-pot, and with a bit of zinc gauze or clean flannel, which has been well washed, cover the hole at the bottom. The next thing is to procure some small gravel, which, after washing well, you should put into the pot to the depth of three inches; on the top of that put some white sand, which also you have thoroughly washed, and above that again put three inches of gravel. Buy two pounds of animal charcoal and wash it well, by placing it in a jug and pouring boiling water on it; then when you see the charcoal has settled, you can pour off the water and put fresh on it. Do this three or four times, and then, when the charcoal is well washed, put it on the gravel and press it well down. If possible have four inches of charcoal. You have now your home-made filter quite ready for use. Pour water into the pot and let it run through into a large glass bottle. Note, please, that if you have used flannel for covering the hole in the bottom of the pot, it should be changed from time to time. When the charcoal becomes clogged take a little off from the top, boil it two or three times, and let it dry spread out before the fire. It will then be quite good again. From time to time all the charcoal and sand may need washing.

Remember, that though good water should be clear, transparency is no proof of its purity, and it is safest to boil as well as filter at least all water which you drink. Boiling acts upon organic matter as well as by driving off the carbonic acid, diminishing the hardness which is owing to earthy carbonates. If it does not actually remove the organic matter it destroys the active power of any poisonous property.

I may mention here, that toast-and-water is a most excellent beverage. The toast purifies the water by reason of the freshly made carbon—which is hardly inferior to animal charcoal—on its surface. Toast-and-water should be of a bright colour rather the shade of amber. It is particularly refreshing in summer, and if you keep a large jug of it handy you will find the thirsty members of the family will pay you the compliment of appreciation by using it very freely.

Salts of lime in water make it very much less good for cooking purposes, the drawback being that when the water boils and the vegetable is beginning to be permeated with it, the carbonate of lime, a kind of chalk, suddenly separates. The vegetable becomes hardened by it instead of becoming nice and soft, and no amount of boiling, however long continued, will remove the chalk. This kind of water can be softened by boiling, and you will find it a good plan to use your boiler water, which has been boiling at least a quarter of an hour, when you want to cook. If you do not do this you should steam and not boil your vegetables.

Always look, from time to time, to the insides of kettles and boilers. The salts which separate collect at the bottom and form a crust or fur. This crust is an extremely bad conductor of heat, and very much retards the water from boiling.

If you have to get water from a distance, and keep it in the house for use, do not store it in buckets or open pans. It is sure to become foul, and besides the fact that dust will fall into it, substances from the air are absorbed by it.

Water that is kept at night in an occupied bedroom is very unwholesome for this same reason, that it becomes impure by absorption of impunities from the air.

But to return to the storing of water. As wood is very much inclined to get soft, and thus to make the water impure, the latter should be put into glazed earthenware or stoneware jars that have covers to them. You should often throw out all the water contained in the jars, and wipe them inside with a clean cloth. Never use metallic vessels for storing water if you can avoid doing so. Iron vessels should, however, always be used for culinary purposes, and when they need mending see that they are not mended with lead solder, for that can be dissolved by water. Cases of lead poisoning have been traced to the use of solder for mending.

The ærated waters sold in England are most excellent, those from the Malvern springs being particularly good.

Sir Henry Thompson says: "Pure water, charged with

gas, does not keep so long as a water to which a little soda or potash is added; but for this purpose six to eight grains in each bottle suffice, a larger quantity is undesirable. All our great makers of aerated waters have now their own artesian wells or other equally trustworthy sources, so that these beverages are unrivalled in excellence. On the other hand, the foreign siphon, made as it often is at any chemist's shop, and from the water of the nearest source, is a very uncertain production. Probably our travelling fellow-countrymen owe their attacks of fever more to drinking water contaminated by sewage matter than to the malarious influences which pervade certain districts of Southern Europe. The only safe water for the traveller to drink is a natural mineral water, and such is now always procurable throughout Europe, except in very remote or unfrequented places. In the latter circumstances no admixture of wine or spirit counteracts the poison in tainted water and makes it safe to drink, as people often delight to believe; but the simple process of boiling it renders it perfectly harmless, and this result is readily attained in any locality by making weak tea to be taken hot or cold, or in making toast water, barley water, lemonade, etc." It may be as well here to give a very simple recipe for lemonade:

1 oz. cream of tartar.
1 quart boiling water.
One lemon cut in slices.
Sugar to taste.

This, drunk when cold, will be found a most delicious beverage.

As a great many drinks called by their makers "barley water" are anything but agreeable or nice, I will give here a very good recipe, which will on trial be found exceedingly nice and refreshing. It is a mistake to use the "prepared barley" sold in tins for this purpose. It is not at all the same thing, and invalids particularly show their distaste for it by never liking it so well as that made with pearl barley. Take, then, a quarter of a pound of pearl barley, put it into a saucepan with enough water to cover it, and boil it; pour off the water and do not use it; add three pints of boiling water to the barley, boil it 1½ hour. Then strain it off for use. Add to the barley about one pint of water, and boil it as before, strain, and when cold add to the former.

An agreeable and useful drink is made by adding to one quart of this barley water, 2 oz. of sliced figs, the same of stoned raisins, and one pint of water. Boil this till reduced to one quart, and strain.

Although not strictly belonging to my subject, water, I cannot help giving my readers another good recipe. To total abstainers from all alcoholic beverages it is always a boon to be told of a pleasant beverage, and I cannot but think that in many homes people moan over an evil when they have taken no pains to prevent it. If you have a variety of agreeable drinks at hand, particularly in hot weather, it takes away the temptation of any member of the household to go and take that which they are best without. You yourself may be indifferent and quite satisfied with water; but to others a variety may act as a preventive, or lessen the hardship found by some, particularly at first, in relinquishing all alcoholic beverages. To return to my recipe. Here it is. Cut some rennet or other apples into thin rounds, put them into a jug, and cover them with boiling water, about an inch above the apples. Cover, and let them stand till cold, and then strain off into a jug.

Thin oatmeal-and-water, with a little sugar, not only quenches thirst wonderfully, but gives more strength and endurance than any other drink. The proportions are three-quarters of a pound of oatmeal to two or three quarts of water. Boil it well, and add 1½ oz. of brown sugar. If you find it thicker than you like, add more water. Shake up the oatmeal well through the liquid before you drink it, and take it cold in summer and hot in winter. If you cannot boil it, mix a little oatmeal with cold water and sugar; but it is best boiled.

CHEAP PLEASURE GIVING.

We can often give an immense amount of pleasure at the cost of a very little self-sacrifice—sometimes at no cost of sacrifice at all. A very little inconvenience, a very little effort, and some one may be pleased, or made happy, or given some enjoyment which otherwise they might have missed. And the world is not so full of enjoyments for most folks, but that we might do well in throwing one or two in their way, if we get the opportunity. The late Emperor William of Germany used often to allow parties of excursionists to be conducted through some of the principal apartments of his favourite country house at Babelsberg even when he was actually there himself. It happened once that he was engaged in the library with one of his secretaries, when the castellan, not knowing that his master was in a part of the house seldom used for official interviews, ushered a section of sightseers from Berlin into the adjoining drawing-room. The Privy Councillor in waiting was for promptly closing the doors of communication, in order to keep out the unwitting intruders; but His Majesty would not allow his holiday-making subjects to be baulked of their amusement. Opening a door in the oaken panelling, he said gaily, "I will go in here, and wait until they have passed on into the other apartments; then I can come out, and we can resume our conversation." With no more ado he squeezed himself into a narrow room like a cupboard, used by the servants for storing away old china, glass, housemaids' brooms, dusters, and so forth. There he patiently remained in the dark for five or six minutes whilst the Berliners were handling the knicknacks on his writing-table, peering at his pictures, and reading the titles of his books. The consternation of the attendants may be imagined when, as the last excursionist passed out of the library, His Majesty emerged from the china closet, and called back one of the footmen, saying under his breath, "Fetch me a clothes-brush, for my coat has got very dusty while I was in prison." That dust on the kindly monarch's coat was in the eyes of heaven more sparkling than the brightest star that ever glittered there. Many a great pleasure can we give, which at the most costs us no more than a very little self-sacrifice—a very little dust.

P. B. P.

NELLIE'S COMPLIMENT.

Oh, sweet to mother's ears and heart the compliments that fall
From the rosy lips of those to whom "mamma is best of all."
My little daughter, seven years old, blue-eyed, with golden hair,
Came creeping up to "mother's room," and softly lingered there.
"Please let me stay, mamma," said she, "I love to see you dress;
There's nothing that I love so well." And I would fain confess
Few things there were I better loved than to feel the gentle hands
Arrange my hair, and hear the soft imperious commands—
"This ribbon you must wear, mamma; your hair must be like this"—
Then, mother-like, she would reward obedience with a kiss.
"What dress will you put on to-night? Mamma, what will you wear?
Let it be father's violet silk, with pansies in your hair;
Do wear it, please," beseechingly my little Nellie said,
A world of interest in her eyes. I pointed to the bed:
There 'neath a covering lay the dress she had not seen before,
A silk the shade of heliotrope, with black lace covered o'er.
"Mamma, how beautiful it is; oh, you *will* look a queen;
I think it is the loveliest dress that I have ever seen."
And Nellie stroked with reverent hand that simple dress of mine;
"Oh, may I take it to the light, I want to see it shine?"
I smiled and brought it to the light; my little daughter stood
Admiring by; "Oh, how it shines! I never thought it would
Glisten so much when hidden up beneath the lace, did you?"
"My child," I said, "it's good inside, and so it glistens through."
My Nellie paused, and silently she stood beside the bed,
At length the golden head was raised; "Mamma," she softly said,
"There could not be a better dress—I mean for you, you know,
Because it is so like yourself, and I'll tell father so."
"Like me," I answered, "why is that, tell me, my darling, do."
"Because, mamma, you're good inside, and it's always shining through."

A. G. W.

WHAT NAP DID.

BY HARRIETTE E. BURCH,

Author of "Wind and Wave Fulfilling His Will."

"You surely are not going to bury yourself in that miserable little out-of-the-way-corner, Louie?"

Louie Winthrop looked up.

"Why not, Flo?"

It was not many months since in bridal wreath and veil she had stood at the altar; and now her bridesmaids, two cousins about her own age, had come to pay their first visit to her pretty bijou home in one of the suburbs.

"Why, Louie!" exclaimed the young votary of fashion, "there's neither parade nor pier. A fortnight in that sleepy place would be the death of *us*. Wouldn't it, Mildred?"

Mildred and Flo Farmer were good-tempered, empty-headed girls, whose one thought from day to day was to gather honey, trusting to the uncertain morrow for the nectar each new opening blossom should bring.

Little Mrs. Winthrop was one of those who view life more seriously. She was one of those good, sober-minded, practical persons who could enjoy a day's pleasure as well as anybody, but who at the same time was ready to help her less fortunate brothers and sisters bear the burdens that had fallen on their shoulders.

Since her marriage she had been obliged to give up her Sunday class; for Mark Winthrop was always tired by the time Saturday came round, and as Louie said, "I don't believe that it can be right for any woman to neglect her home duties."

Some of her good friends turned up their noses at this.

"Stuff and nonsense!" one said. "Only an excuse for laziness. Mark might very well doze over his book, or have a quiet stroll while she is away, like the rest of the idle husbands do."

"She that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband," said another, with a self-righteous sneer, feeling herself somewhat of a saint in sacrificing her ease to teach the little ones of the flock.

But Louie's conscience was at peace.

"A wife who does not study to make home attractive is

building up trouble for herself," she said, and went her own way, doing many an unostentatious act of charity, and speaking many a helping word to old and young in the cottages she visited. Her Christianity was not likely to rust for want of use.

Mildred and Flo had succeeded at last in arousing Mark from his book.

"You girls have queer notions of enjoyment if crowded parades and piers are your *sine quâ non*," said he, looking up. "Give me a good beach and a fine, open country to ramble about, when the murmuring waves grow monotonous."

"Murmuring waves," repeated Mildred. "I like to hear the band, and see the people. Who cares to tramp rough country roads?"

"I'm glad I married a quiet, sensible girl, who is not for ever sighing after fine dresses and gay company," said Mark. "My little Louie can be happy without all the latest novelties."

Louie coloured slightly. She didn't exactly want her cousins to run away with the idea that their means were very limited.

"I shouldn't like you to be any longer in that stifling office to buy me feathers and flowers, Mark. It wouldn't give me any pleasure to wear them at that cost."

There was an awkward pause, then Mildred changed the subject.

"Why do you read that horrid, mopish biography?"

Mark opened the book at the place where he had left off, and looked at it.

"Mopish!" exclaimed Louie. "I was just going to ask Mark to read it aloud."

"Oh, of course you are sure to say you like what Mark likes. Love, honour, and obey, you know," added Flo.

"I don't believe that Louie's individuality is quite so hopelessly lost," answered Mark. "Don't you think the lives of good and great men are very instructive?"

"Instructive!" repeated Flo. "I never read anything but stories now, I don't want to be good. I'd rather be happy."

Louie looked pained. "Can any one be really happy without being good?" Mark asked.

"Of course not. If I'm cross even, it makes me quite miserable. It must be dreadful to be wicked."

"What is your idea of happiness?"

Flo's eyes sparkled. "Oh, to go out, and never have any bothers."

"I see," said Mark. "You want to take all the sugar from life, and give nothing in return."

"You are rather hard on Flo, Mark," said Mildred; "we should do our part in amusing others. I often wish, though, that I had something really useful to do."

"Oh, Mildred!" said Flo, "I never wish that."

"I do," answered Mildred. "Mark is right; to be truly happy, we must give quite as much as we receive."

"Then only rich people can ever be happy," exclaimed Flo.

"If money were all we had to give it would be so," said Mark; "but I think we may often do as much or more good by little homely acts of kindness. The lady visitor who nurses the baby, while its hard-worked mother goes on with her ironing, helps her far more than she would by bribing her with a shilling to put up with half an hour or so of good advice or exhortation."

Just then the door was pushed open, and a great St. Bernard dog came rushing in. "Nap, good dog!" cried Flo, snapping her fingers at him.

"Why do you read that horrid, mopish biography?"

Nap was Hammond Winthrop's dog, and Flo felt sure Hammond was not far off.

Hammond was Mark's younger brother. He was studying medicine, and had been round nearly every evening since the girls had been there.

Hammond would sing to her accompaniment—Hammond would set them all laughing with his funny stories, and Flo was tired of listening to what she called Louie's inane dissertations on housekeeping.

Flo was just pushing a stray lock of hair from her face when Hammond made his appearance.

Mildred looked up with a languid smile, Flo beamed brightly on him, while Nap

eager to welcome his master, dashed so roughly between Louie and the small table that he upset it, sending lamp and all over right at the two sisters' feet.

For a moment darkness seemed to have closed over the room; then the wick flamed up, setting light to the oil which ran along the carpet in a stream of fire.

Mildred rushed screaming to the other side of the room, but Flo, paralyzed by fear, sat staring helplessly at the blazing oil.

The flames were spreading round her feet, they had caught the edge of her dainty zephyr skirt, they were mounting upwards towards her head; but like lightning Hammond sprang forward, seized the hearthrug, and flung it upon the blazing mass before Mark could do anything; then crumpling Flo's skirt in his hands, extinguished it in time to save her face.

Hammond's hands were badly burnt, and Flo had an ugly scar on one wrist; but both have reason to be thankful for the accident which forced Flo into seclusion for some weeks, and gave her time for quiet thought.

The danger from which she had so narrowly escaped set her thinking, and Mark's words came back to her with tenfold meaning.

Piers and parades have lost their charm, for she has found out how much truer is the happiness that comes from helping others. Dr. Hammond Winthrop, her husband now, is very good to the poor, and many a life has been spared through her womanly kindness, many a deathbed sweetened by the words of faith and hope that have come from her lips.

A VISIT TO A TELEGRAPH CABLE STATION.

BY E. WHITFIELD CROFTS, F.R.S.L.

SINCE the first cable was tentatively laid across the Channel, to what dimensions has submarine telegraphy grown! The discovery of the electric telegraph, and the invention of the steam-engine may safely be pronounced the most wonderful events of the age, as they have certainly been responsible more than anything else for the marvellous development of modern science, and the immense impetus given to civilization. Scarcely half a century has passed since Professor Oersted found that a magnetised needle was deflected by the passage of an electric current along a wire placed near it, and yet at the present time the messages weekly transmitted in this country alone by instruments based on this principle are numbered by the hundred thousand; and there is scarcely any part of the world that is not traversed by wires, along which our thoughts are constantly being flashed with a speed equal to their own. Where formerly, and in the memory of thousands still living, the post was the fastest method of communicating with those at a distance, now the mysterious something called electricity carries our thoughts with lightning rapidity to the remotest corners of the globe. Electricity puts a girdle round the earth in a little less than a tenth of a second, and though for all practical purposes such a high rate is not possible nor necessary, the speed attained may be said to annihilate distance.

The first, and several subsequent attempts to lay a workable cable were failures; but capitalists were undaunted, and the keenest men of science tussled doggedly with difficulties, until at length a great triumph was achieved, the commerce of the world took, so to speak, a great leap forward, and enterprise everywhere, and of almost every description, was wonderfully stimulated. At the present moment there are millions of miles of overland wires, while the continents are interlaced by a system of no less than 950 cables, with an aggregate length of over 120,000 nautical miles. In the past four or five years the "Dark Continent" has been completely encircled by submarine telegraphs, for which purpose more than 17,000 miles of cable have been required. These figures speak volumes, and bear startling testimony to the peaceful revolution inaugurated by the telegraph less than fifty years ago.

The greater number of the cables are the property of private companies. This is the case with the Atlantic cables, of which no less than eleven have been stretched between Europe and North America, with a total length of over 30,000 nautical miles. Two of the latest Atlantic cables owe their origin to the enterprise of three American millionaires, and as though the five companies which are engaged in forwarding telegrams between this country and America were not enough, another company, financed by American gold, is expected shortly to be floated.

The Commercial Cable Company works the Mackay-Bennett cables, which are landed on either side in Ireland and Nova Scotia; and Jay Gould's cables, leased to the Western Union Telegraph Cable Company, stretch from Cape Canso in Nova Scotia to Penzance in Cornwall. These cables were brought under the road from Whitesand Bay near the Land's End, a distance of ten miles. At Porthcurno, in the desolate region of the Land's End, the Eastern Telegraph Company (the largest owners of submarine cables) have a large establishment for the transaction of business and the training of telegraphists. The staff call themselves The Exiles, of course for very obvious reasons, though everything possible is done for the alleviation of their hard lot. The Exiles have just started a magazine of their own.

But in the extreme south-west of Ireland there are three groups of telegraphists who claim our sympathy far more than their *confrères* in Cornwall. Some little time since I visited these lonely colonies, and have retained a most lively recollection of the desolate aspect of the district in which they are compelled to live.

I remember my journey out. It was very interesting to me, as it revealed certain phases of life of which I was formerly ignorant, and gave me a sight of Irish scenery which I shall be slow to forget. I got so far as Killarney by rail, and then I was obliged to take car and endure some forty miles of pitiless jolting through country scenes that were depressing because of their air of poverty, and the misery and squalor of the people.

At the end of this long pilgrimage I arrived at a town—one of the most forlorn, woe-begone towns surely anywhere to be found within the confines of a civilised country. Close to this assemblage of hut-like houses is the island of Valencia, on which is a large cable station with a consider-

able staff comfortably housed in substantial stone buildings.

But I had to go still further west, so I mounted another car and was driven away over the bleak moors and the sodden potato fields. The misery of the half-starved inhabitants, and the unutterable gloom of the stretches of bog-land and ill-cultivated soil, with here and there a dirty cottage half in ruins, which a Zulu might disdain to own, it is quite impossible to describe.

Came I at length to the margin of the sea. Several low, rambling wooden sheds were pointed out to me, half obscured by the rising mists. These wooden huts represent the cable station of the Direct United States Cable Company, where one cable stretches from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to this lonely Ballinskelligs Bay. A little further along on the same shore is the station of the Commercial Cable Company.

Suppose we enter one of the low tarred sheds of the "Direct." Uninviting enough it looks from the outside; but once inside and we seem to forget that we are on the wild shores of West Kerry. The rooms are warm and bright; great fires are burning, and the large, well-trimmed lamps would put gas to the blush. You might be in a City office for all the difference you would see here. The heavy office furniture, the smart air of business in every room, the discipline and order of the men, and the faultless manner in which they are dressed, with spotless cuffs and collars—all this assists to make the illusion perfect.

Into the room in which we first enter is brought the end of the American cable, and there affixed to the delicate mechanism which receives the current and records the signals. The instrument employed is Thomson's Reflector, or as it is familiarly called, the "Mirror." Sir William Thomson has done more than any other man to facilitate improvement in nearly every department of the service, and the "Mirror" is one of the most beautiful and perfect inventions, and has been of immense advantage to submarine telegraphy.

With as little technicality as possible, I will try to convey an idea of the working of this wonderful little instrument.

A small piece of magnetised steel watch-chain, three-eighths of an inch long, is fastened with shellac on the back of a little round concave mirror, and of about the size of a fourpenny or sixpenny piece. This is suspended by a piece of unspun silk-thread in the centre of a coil of many hundred turns of fine copper wire, insulated with silk, and well protected between the turns with varnish. The little mirror hangs in the middle of its coil with the magnet lying horizontally. A paraffin lamp is made to throw its light through a slit in the face of the little mirror, and opposite to this latter is fixed a board or scale on which the spot of light is reflected. The mirror is so adjusted as to cause the spot of light to fall in the middle of the scale. When a current is passed through the coil the little magnet is deflected as in the case of the single needle; and since the magnet is fastened to the mirror, which is very light, both are deflected as forming one body, and the spot of light accordingly moves on the scale. The movement will be right or left as the current passes in the one or the other direction, and the signals are translated just as those for the right and left deflections of the single needle, with which doubtless many are acquainted.

This galvanometer is so marvellously delicate that it requires a comparatively weak current to work it, even through a very long circuit. With the ordinary pivoted needle there is great friction, but with the "Mirror" there is absolutely none, and for the latter a much weaker current suffices, which is better both for speed and the safety of the cable itself. Signals have been transmitted across the Atlantic and perfectly well observed on the "Mirror" by a current produced in rather a minute battery—viz., a thimble—with one zinc and copper wire and a drop of sulphuric acid in water!

The spot of light thrown by the "mirror" should move right or left on the scale, with a steady action; but, spite of every contrivance to keep the signals steady, the currents in the long cables are so irregular that the spot of light flits about in a most bewildering manner, and it is a matter of long practice before a man can readily interpret them.

This room is only partially lighted, so that the operator may more easily note the faltering deflections of the little spot of light. The "Mirror" is more difficult to learn than any other instrument, not only from the unsteady action, but because, unlike the Morse, there is not the slightest assistance from the ear. Good Morse operators depend entirely on the ear in reading signals; but the silent motion of the light as it wanders to and fro before the eyes is most embarrassing. Sometimes from "earth currents" or inductive embarrassment, or from some other cause, the signals are so wild and erratic that the skilled operator is at his wits' end, and the constant strain on the eyes is most injurious. Most old operators are short-sighted.

Let the reader imagine himself posted in front of the instrument through the long hours of night. As he reads the signals he repeats them aloud, and the "writer" at his elbow commits them to paper. His attention must never flag for a second, for if once he were to remove his eyes from the spot of light dancing before him, and aggravating his optics with many illusions, some part of the message would escape him and the operator at New York would have to "repeat." The "Mirror" clerk is well paid, and he certainly well earns his salary.

In an adjoining room the messages received in the "Mirror" are being transmitted by the Morse instrument to London and Liverpool, and messages received here are carried to the "Mirror" clerk to be cabled to America. The traffic here is usually very heavy, over 1,000 messages a day often passing through this office. This heavy business is about to be facilitated by "duplexing" the cable, which is an arrangement whereby signalling can be conducted at the same moment from both ends of a circuit on a single cable.

The other rooms in this station are taken up with the batteries, the Superintendent's office, the reading and billiard rooms, where the clerks off duty try to kill time, and sleeping and living rooms.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

Although the days of October are still bright, they lack the warmth and sunshine of summer, and we have reluctantly to turn to the planning of the winter wardrobe, a serious matter in every household. The many women who refuse to wear an outer wrap until compelled to do so by the near approach of winter, will this year find a goodly variety of top garments from which to choose, the accepted styles ranging from the basque cloth jacket, with its air of elegance, to the flowing long cloak, the ample folds of which suggest comfort and protection. In this month's issue we give an illustration (fig 28) of an autumn cloak, with an adjustable cape which can be worn with equal effect, with or without the cloak. 3 yards of 54 inch material are required for carrying out this design. The fashion may be developed in diagonal, corkscrew, cheviot, broad-cloth, striped, figured or checked cloaking, in dark blue, green, brown, dark red, tan, grey, or some other fashionable shade. A very pretty effect may be produced by making the yoke, collar, and cuffs of Astrakhan, Persian lamb, velvet, or seal plush. In the present instance the material chosen is dark brown checked camel hair. The cloak is tight fitting, similar to an ulster, cut full at the back about 6 inches below the waist, to form box-pleats, and is machine stitched all round for a finish. The closing of the fronts is made with buttons and button-holes from the neck to the bottom. The sleeve is coat-shaped, and a cuff is outlined with machine stitching, two buttons being placed below the stitching, just in front of the outside seam. The upper portion of the cape is formed by a deep-pointed yoke, fitted by shoulder seams, and finished with a Medici collar that rounds narrowly at the front. The lower is plaited into the yoke, and falls in natural folds. The front edges of the cape are turned under for hems, and machine stitched.

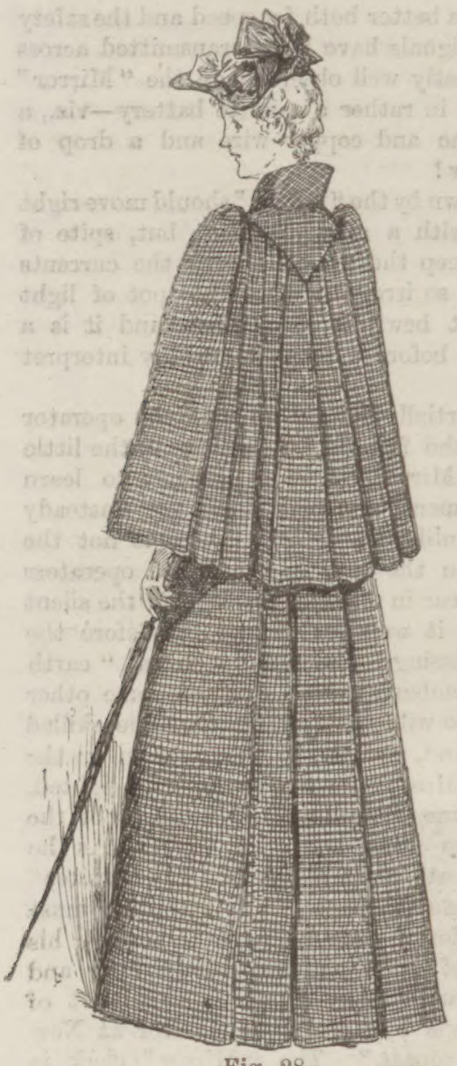


Fig. 28.

Millinery has changed but little since the summer months. Certainly some prevailing modes are far from becoming, and have apparently been selected without the least regard to effect. Sensible head-gear, that which affords protection from the cold, seems altogether a thing of the past, and now a puff of silk with a spangled jet ornament is all that many women consider necessary to adorn their heads. However, the more sensible portion of the community are beginning to see that these tiny capotes are anything but pretty, and large hats are decidedly in the lead for young ladies. Ribbons of all kinds are used with great liberality. Amongst the most popular varieties for trimmings may be mentioned velvet striped ribbons, Persian ribbons showing new colour combinations, and plain velvet and silk ribbons illuminated with cut beads in colours, which render them almost as effective as jewels. Plain, narrow velvet ribbons are as fashionable as ever, and produced in all the newest shades. Bonnets are close fitting, and are worn higher towards the front. Although felt hats are still worn, bonnets of that material have fallen wholly into disuse, and are now made of velvet and passementerie. Accompanying the cloak here shown, we give a charmingly feminine design known as the Louise Chapeau. The shape is made in felt, with a wide-brimmed front, diminishing to the turned-up back, and trimmed with a broad ribbon, a bow being arranged on the left side of the brim at the front; the ribbon is then drawn slantingly across the crown, and finished off with a bow at the back.

Our next illustration (fig. 29) shows a dressing jacket of coral pink flannel, embroidered in white silk. The yoke, front and bottom hem are feather-stitched with silk, whilst the collar (which is shaped like a gentleman's cricket shirt), cuffs, and waistband are worked in marguerites; the edges of the collar and cuffs are scolloped and button-holed. The jacket fastens in the usual way, with buttons and button-holes down the fronts. Two yards of flannel, and one ball of silk at 10¾d., will complete the design. Flourishing thread is almost as effective, and washes better than silk.

Fig. 29.

Flat patterns can be supplied, 6½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.

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